

By Congressman Sam Farr

May 25, 2011

Every year on Memorial Day, we come together to remember those who have sacrificed their lives on behalf of our country in the name of freedom and democracy. The debt owed to them is immeasurable. Their sacrifices and those of their military families are our freedom's foundation and guardians.

As we remember the patriotic sacrifice of those that have lost their lives, we renew our commitment to keep our promise to the nation's more than 2 million troops and reservist, their families, and 23 million veterans.

As a member of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, I have continued to champion the cause of veterans on the Central Coast and across the country. In fact over the last four years, I worked with the Democratic-led Congress to make historic

gains for America's troops, veterans and military families.

And this week, I voted in support of increasing funding for the Veteran Affairs Department by \$1.4 billion above last year's level. The funding bill will next be voted on by the House of Representatives.

During the process of putting together the bill, I also used my influence to include funds that will make \$46 million available for the construction of state veteran cemeteries across the country. This is important because, this will go a long way in helping the local veterans I have been working with for more than 15 years—to finally achieving the dream of the For Ord Veterans Cemetery.

A few days ago, I was also proud to vote in support of the Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011 (H.R. 1383) that will allow millions of young veterans to pursue a higher education, and give them the opportunity to build successful lives after their dedicated service.

Building on this effort, last week, Democrats introduced the Heroes for Hiring Act—which takes big steps to help our men and women in uniform obtain good jobs when they come home. With nearly one-in-four young veterans unemployed, this critical legislation would strengthen much needed training programs for separating service members, and encourage businesses and government contractors to hire the brave men and women who have developed valuable skills and professionalism while in the armed forces.

These latest efforts are just another in a long string of steps that fulfill the promise our country made to our veterans, to protect them and take care of them. I'm very proud and thankful for their service.